1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

My experiences with modern natives of Easter Island make me doubt the truth of this system of retaliation. Certainly the offended person would try to avenge the theft by any method possible, but it seems hardly probable that the thief would accept his punishment if he were the stronger.

At the present time, a robbed person may try to identify the thief and recover the lost property. A thief caught in the act of stealing is punished. Many natives now go to the Chilean Subdelegado to complain, although they know he can do little. The captain of the training ship, *Baquedano*, is the supreme authority to which the islanders appeal. He stays on the island only a few days and metes justice according to his temper or fancy.

VENGEANCE

Persons who felt deeply injured or unjustly treated were sometimes overwhelmed by madness (*heva*) which led them to commit the most daring deeds. A man or woman who yielded to this state of fury ate soil (*kai te oone*), ran to-and-fro with a rat in his mouth, and tried to harm those who had offended him. "I am eating soil" is still a common expression to indicate anger or spite. These crises were considered temporary diseases. If a person in this state of anger recited an appropriate charm, he might succeed in killing the person who had aroused his wrath. (See the legend of Raraku, p. 370.)

Revenge was the most usual incentive for wars and feuds. Many tales and legends of Easter Island are concerned with details of revenge (*ati te kopeka*) taken by lineages or tribes for the murder of one of their members. According to information given me by the natives, the family of the murdered tried to kill the murderer, but if they did not succeed, any other person belonging to the culprit's family was killed. The victim's father or some other relative resorted to a special priest called *timo-ika* (chanter of the corpse) who performed certain rites to cause the murderer to die. Every lineage or subtribe had many such priests who carried out all rituals for revenge. This did not prevent the injured party from waging war or pursuing the culprit. The corpse of the dead man was put on the ahu and the *timo-ika* chanted spells, at the same time brandishing a pallet (*rapa-ika*). My informant gave rhythmic and gutteral sounds which he pretended were an imitation of the *timo-ika's* chant. The only words he remembered were: *Oeo e hiva e*. From time to time the priest turned the body of the dead, an act supposed to be very harmful to the family or the entire group of the murderer.

The pallets used in the above ceremony were of wood or bone, oval, and provided with a short handle. Two *rapa-ika*, one made of wood and the other of whalebone, were purchased by Thomson (215, pl. 53, figs. 3-4). The wooden specimen had cracked and the two pieces were sewn together through small holes perforated along the break. The whalebone pallet is 30 inches long and 14 inches wide. It is decorated with the incised figures of two birds traced according to the style of the tablets.